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**Contacts:**

Scott Simms, Bonneville Power Administration, 503-230-3520  
John Harrison, NW Power and Conservation Council, 503-222-5161  
Paul Vogel, Pacific Power, 503-813-6642

**Energy experts say it's time to run, not walk,  
toward a new era in energy efficiency for the NW**

**PORTLAND, Ore.** – The newly formed Northwest Energy Efficiency Taskforce held its kickoff meeting yesterday and underscored that the Pacific Northwest can't start soon enough to add to the region's impressive energy-efficiency improvements of the last two decades. By accelerating efforts to tap the vast potential of electric power efficiency, the region will further reduce demand for power, improve environmental quality, and lower costs for consumers who face the seemingly never-ending escalation of fuel costs, leaders of the effort agreed.

Thirty senior-level representatives from utilities, businesses, government and energy efficiency specialists from Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana and British Columbia met for the first time to chart a course for the Northwest to coordinate, enhance and accelerate programs and investments to use electricity more efficiently.

The Northwest has a proven history in energy-efficiency leadership, dating to the Northwest Power Act of 1980, which made energy efficiency the preferred resource to meet increasing demand for power. Since then, about half of the growth in demand for electricity in the region has been met through efficiency. But the region could do better.

"The outcome of this effort will be actionable items to improve what we already do very well," said Ken Canon, Taskforce coordinator.

The taskforce has three co-chairs: Steve Wright, administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration; Pat Reiten, president of Pacific Power; and Tom Karier, a Washington member and former chairman of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council.

"The time is right for this effort," Wright said. "We face a rapidly changing energy landscape. The cost of alternative generating resources, like wind power, is rising. We need to take advantage of the growing public interest in energy efficiency."

Reiten, who leads one of the largest investor-owned electric utilities in the region, said investments in energy efficiency are important to help moderate the widening gap between demand for power and the power supply. Cost-effective energy efficiency also helps mitigate the impact of rising energy prices to consumers, compared to the much higher cost of building

generating plants or buying power. Pacific Power's long-term plan includes efficiency improvements in its own operations and also significant amounts of energy efficiency.

"We need to invest our customers' dollars wisely," Reiten said.

Karier also noted the growing public awareness about energy efficiency. Doing a better job of coordinating conservation investments, and also research into promising new technologies, will pay long-term benefits, he said.

"We need to look ahead and make sure the pool of energy efficiency in the Northwest doesn't dry up," he said.

The Taskforce will address the future of energy efficiency in six areas:

- 1) Data/research needs;
- 2) Research and development of new technologies;
- 3) Utility-funded initiatives to acquire energy efficiency;
- 4) Marketing and public awareness;
- 5) Education and workforce recruitment for energy-efficiency jobs; and
- 6) Energy-efficiency policy options.

The Taskforce will focus on those challenges and related issues in its work through the summer and fall. The taskforce plans to report its recommendations in early December. The effort may conclude with an energy-efficiency symposium, open to the public, to discuss and highlight the results and recommendations.

Efficiency is the least-expensive way to meet new demand for electricity. While there is a cost to install efficiency measures, after that there are no fuel cost and no environmental risks from greenhouse gas emissions. The cost of efficiency improvements is, on average, about one-third the cost of new generating plants, including wind power. Since 1980, the Northwest has reduced demand for electricity through efficiency improvements by 3,700 megawatts. About 200 megawatts of that total was achieved in 2007 alone, a single-year record for the 28-year time span since regional efficiency efforts began under the Northwest Power Act. Expressed as electricity generation, the 3,700 megawatts of efficiency savings is enough power for Seattle, Portland, and Boise combined.

"The good news for the Northwest is that there is much more efficiency available," Karier said.

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council estimates the cost-effective energy conservation potential in the region is at least 3,100 more megawatts – an amount that will grow as the average price of electricity increases. Achieving that potential, however, will require improved regional coordination, collaboration, commitment, and customer involvement.

For more details on the Taskforce, visit: [www.nwcouncil.org/energy/neet/Default.asp](http://www.nwcouncil.org/energy/neet/Default.asp)

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